



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COORDINATING GROUP

Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regions)
Bureau of Land Management (Colorado and Wyoming)
Fish and Wildlife Service (Mountain/Prairie Region)
Forest Service (Rocky Mountain Region)
National Park Service (Intermountain and Midwest Regions)
State Agencies in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas

Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group Meeting Denver, Colorado October 19-20, 2004

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Larry Trapp (*for John Glenn*)
Bill Wallis
David Carter
Len Dems
Tom Corbin
Lindon Wiebe
Ray Weidenhaft
Rich Homann
Jim Fletcher
Joyce Feeley

Guests:

Larry Helmerick
Cal Anacker
Jim Krugman
Marcus Schmidt

Members Not Present:

John Glenn
Joe Lowe
Darrell Ausborn
John Waconda
Ross Hauck
Don Westover

Introductions

Introductions were not necessary since the group was so small with no new faces. The morning was spent on informal discussion.

Review Action Items, Joyce Feeley

Action items were not reviewed but members should review them on their own.

Agency Review and Organization Charts

Each agency representative was asked to bring an organizational chart showing the structure of their respective agency's fire organization with names and positions. Agency fire organization charts were presented for Colorado State Forest Service, Wyoming State Forestry, Colorado BLM, Wyoming BLM, NPS- Intermountain Region, FWS-Mountain/Prairie Region, BIA-Rocky Mountain Region, and USFS-Rocky Mountain Region. Each organization, structure, personnel changes and personnel duties were discussed in detail. **(Handouts A)**

State and Private Forestry R2-RO Organization Update, Linden Wiebe

Linden Wiebe handed out a briefing paper **(Handout B)** concerning the reorganization of the Region 2 State and Private Forest, Fire and Aviation organization. The FY04 and FY05 staff budget for SPF R2-RO will remain flat resulting in net reduction of \$800,000. The SPF staff reduction is \$400,000. Reductions in staffing/services are required for FY05. Meetings have been ongoing for a year concerning specific cost-cutting measures and reductions in staffing. The briefing paper outlines how the reorganization will transition, including the changes in staff, Civil Rights impacts, placement assistance, developing contingency plans, and monitor ongoing development.



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RMCG Business Manager

There is still no funding commitment for the cost of a Business Manager. It is still unanimously agreed the Business Manager is needed but no alternatives for hiring one. Linden Wiebe will be the incoming RMCG Chair in January. He made the following proposal: *Every incoming Chair will bring an administrative person with him.*

Decision: RMCG had discussed similar proposals in the past and agreed it would not work. It is felt the Business Manager would need to provide continuity that would not come with a short term commitment.

Rich Homann proposed a Business Manager be hired and the agencies fund it with a fair share agreement with the states and agencies each kicking in ½ FTE funding. After much discussion it was agreed that a decision could not be made until RMCG has a fair share document and process.

Decision:

1. Jim Fletcher will have a fair share proposal by December 15, 2004
2. Jim will provide RMCG with 2 or 3 alternatives on how to fill the Business Manager position.
3. Jim will develop a Position Description for the Business Manager position.

Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS), Jim Fletcher/Gwenan Poirier

The Predictive Services people at Rocky Mountain Coordination Center (RMCC) are still not satisfied with the data they see coming from the RAWS. They are looking for some feedback from the agencies on what they agencies consider acceptable. They do not feel the agencies are properly maintaining the RAWS and are not quality checking the data produces by the RAWS. Some stations have been found to be "down/messed up" for as long as a year but still sending bad data that could be used by field personnel for planning. (Unaware the data is bad).

Decision: RMCG asked the Predictive Services group to provide an outline for identifying when a station is no longer considered a NFDRS station, what notifications should be made when a problem station has been identified, what should be done with the station, etc. They were also asked to provide a 2004 summary list of stations where there are perceived issues, similar to last year, so agencies see the extent of the problems. The process will be completed and presented to RMCG for review at the January RMCG meeting.

Region 2 was awarded a national RAWS Maintenance Pilot Project beginning in 2005 that will test station maintenance by a private vendor on 50 USFS stations in the Region. This will probably negate in 2005 putting too much effort in developing processes and notification procedures at least for FS stations until the pilot and evaluation is complete.

Fuels and Fire Use Committee, Cal Anaker

The Fuels and Fire Use Committee is planning a workshop for anyone interested. The workshop will be in Grand Junction, Colorado, February 1-3, 2005. Some of the topics for the workshop include: 2004 R-2 Rx & Fuels Program, Fire Use Case Studies, San Juan Basin Interagency Project, Rx/WFU Implementation Guide, Predictive Services, Smoke Management, Equipment, Contracting, etc. It should be a good workshop.

The Fuels and Fire Use Committee is looking for a new State representative for the committee. (Bernie Post retired)



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Fred Bird, Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Incident Commander is going to retire. The Operations (OPS) Committee has included the vacancy in it's annual IMT recruitment/advertising process that will begin later this month.

There is a WFU National meeting in San Diego that Mike Frary was scheduled to attend. Mike is unable to make that commitment so he is looking for someone else to attend. If there is anyone who would like to attend that meeting please let Mike Frary know.

There was discussion concerning continued problems for the Forest Service with sharing Prescribed fire (Rx) resources. The Interagency sharing and support processes are difficult and unclear. Clear and concise details need to be documented for cost sharing, reimbursement, personnel time, cache replacement items, equipment use, etc.

Decision: Linden Wiebe will get this on the agenda of the National Forest Service Fire Directors meeting in San Diego the 1st week in November.

RMACC/Season Review, Jim Fletcher

ROSS – The Dispatch community would like RMCG support with National Multi-agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) concerning the ROSS Hierarchy. NMAC continues to support the concept, in ROSS, that if you want to show available for one position you must show available for all positions you are qualified for. This is very difficult for Dispatch to deal with if. For example, an overhead resource does not wish to be available Nationally for a particular position but would feel confident enough to be available locally or regionally. This happens frequently when someone is qualified but is trying to gather experience. Or, perhaps a resource is only interested to be available for their priority training position. Currently there is no way to show that in ROSS.

Decision: RMCG agreed that a change needed to be made in ROSS.

Jim Fletcher and Mark Nelson will put together a proposal for RMCG to take and present to the NMAC meeting.

Mobilization Center Plan – Jim would like to develop as Mobilization Center Plan. He asked if anyone remembered when someone developed one for RMAC. (he thinks in 2000) He would like to see the Plan formalized with contact names and places identified.

Decision: Jim Fletcher will look back through RMAC files to see if he can find the plan that was done.

Satellite Caches – There is some talk about putting Satellite Caches at various locations in the Rocky Mountain Region. This is just an idea being talked about. **Jim will bring it up with the OPS Committee.**

Border Agreements – The Border Agreements with Northern Rockies and Easter Great Basin have been revised to include language for Rx fire, extended attack and cache. **(Handout C)**

Decision: The Northern Rockies agreement was agreed to by RMCG and signed by Rich Homan. Jim Fletcher will send to Northern Rockies for agreement and signature. The original with both signatures should be sent to Joyce Feeley for the RMCG records.
Jim will have the Great Basin agreement completed and ready for the joint RMCG/GBCG meeting.



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Shared Position – Last January the states discussed sharing and funding a position at the RMCC. It was mentioned the position could possibly share duties at the RMCC and the RMCG Business Manager. Jim Fletcher developed a position description for the position and asked RMCG if there was any decision from the states? There has been no further discussion among the states on the position. **Jim gave Wyoming and Colorado copies of the position description again and asked them to continue consideration of the position. (HO D)**

RMC To-Do List (HO E)

Jim passed out copies of the To Do list for RMCC. A brief discussion followed.

State of Colorado Emergency Resource Mobilization Plan (HO F)

The state of Colorado developed their Emergency Resource Mobilization Plan and included RMCC in the plan. Jim voiced some concern that it may have some effect on how the dispatch centers and the coordination center do business. There may be a need for better communication and coordination.

After lunch everyone watched the video of Larry Helmerick's 2004 Media Presentation. The presentation was what was needed for the public to better understand how agencies are dealing with fire.

RM/GB Incident Business Committee Update, Ray Weidenhaft

The Committee submitted a letter for RMCG and GBCG signature requesting approval to remain a joint geographic area committee. **(HO G)**

Decision: RMCG approved the request. Rich Homann signed the letter and Ray will take the letter to the GBCG for signature. The original document should be returned to Joyce for RMCG records.

The Committee sent a survey form to constituents asking for issues that needed to be resolved. The Committee was able to respond to most of the issues but there were two issues the Committee felt should be forwarded to RMCG. **(HO H)**

1. Work Rest Issue – Cites a Team's operating guidelines conflict with the 2:1 work rest ration and facilitate the individuals in recording time on timesheets that was not worked.
2. Pay Regulations – Cites a team operation types taking only one break in 14-16 hour operational period when they clearly are eating in camp during the dinner hour and claiming the time as worked. This is a violation of pay regulations and falsification of a pay document.

Decision: RMCG has a standard set of guideline that team must adhere to. RMCG will make this a topic at the spring meeting and re-enforce the Standards that meeting.

The Committee is still working on the AD Rates (1-5) and making them standard across the nation.

Dispatch Committee Update, Len Dams

Many of the topics for the Dispatch Committee were covered yesterday under RMCC business.

The Dispatch Committee/Center Manager meeting is scheduled for November 16-17, 2003 in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Training Committee Update

The Training Committee was meeting at the same time as RMCG.

The Committee is concerned there are not many Finance classes in the Rocky Mountain area. They are working to get more.

The Training Committee is a very active committee and feels they need better RMCG support. They are requesting an active Liaison. **RMCG will look into it.**



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Team Update, Jim Krugman

- ? Reviewed the Team assignments for the year.
- ? Talked about the recruitment for Incident Commanders (IC) We are losing one IC for sure. (Fred Bird will retire)
- ? Type 3 Teams – What qualifies some of the Type 3 positions such as OPS3? If we are going to continue to encourage Type 3 teams we need some clear standards for positions and how to handle transition from Type 2 to Type 3 incidents.
- ? Eastern Great Basin is out with the announcements/recruitments for Teams. There are RMA people interested in participating on GBA teams and are wondering if RMCG has to approve that. **The answer is Yes, RMCG needs to approve it. There are things that have to be considered.**
- ? Teams feel that since we share Teams and Team members we should consider joint Business and Operations Committees. **We already share the Business Committee.**
- ? Teams are wondering if we need to revisit Team configuration for response to all risk incidents. Do we need to respond with 50 people to all risk incidents? Currently, trainees are being ordered as Technical Specialists so they are eligible to go with the Team.
- ? Task books are being signed off by non-qualified people. We need to review who is qualified to sign off on a task book.
- ? Government Drivers License – While in Region 8 the Forest Service was holding firm on this requirement. No one was allowed to drive a FS vehicle unless they had the training and a FS driver's certification. If you have recently had a defensive driving course, in some instances that will suffice for getting the FS certification. We need to get the training for Region 2 people. **Jim Krugman will work on getting defensive driver training for those who need a government license in the Rocky Mountain area.**
- ? There is an individual who attended but did not pass S-420. Based on his past experience and observations on the job, the unanimous opinion is that he is qualified. There is a letter asking RMCG to intervene.
Decision: The requirement for the position is to pass S-420. RMCG will discuss it with the OPS Committee.

Aviation Update, Jim Krugman

- ? The situation with the heavy air tankers is pretty much the same. If you need a heavy airtanker, you may get a heavy helicopter.
- ? Next year the Type 2 severity helicopters may be cut by 1/3.
- ? There was a push for helicopter modules to be hired with the Type 2 severity helicopters instead of local units supplying the modules. The national office is saying NO, local units will continue to supply the modules.
- ? There is no huge aviation commitment from agencies right now due to the national election.
- ? Seats – Colorado State FS provides up to 5 SEATs in various locations around the State. They will have one available year round. Colorado BLM currently has plans for 3 SEATs under contract in 05. 2 in Grand Junction and 1 at Canon City.
- ? Helicopter availability:
NPS - The helicopter normally stationed in Mesa Verde National Park will be moved to either the interagency Hesperus worksite (pending Colorado State agreement) or the Durango, CO airport, beginning 2005 field season. The helicopters at Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park were from Hawkins and Powers and the contracts will end this field season. Both parks will be soliciting for new contracts as soon as possible.



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Wyoming BLM – The Wyoming BLM is discontinuing its portion of the funding for the exclusive use helicopter at Fort Washakie. Larry Trapp says this is a National decision and left them with no other option. This will probably result in the helicopter no longer being at Fort Washakie unless the other agencies can come up with the extra funding. There is an exclusive use helicopter at Rawlins that is fully torch qualified (helicopter, pilot & module) will all the equipment. Rawlins is purchasing a portable SEAT retardant kit. It can be set up at any airport in approximately 3 hours.

USFS – Region 2 will be hosting the twin-engine Lead plane this year. The Barons are going away and they are still looking for suitable replacements. The Forest Service is still recommending that if you need a Lead plane you should consider using the Aerial Supervision Module (ASM), if one is available. It is mandatory in Region 3.

Decision: RMCG will consider whether it is necessary for SEATS and if so will consider making it mandatory in Region 2.

RMACC Preparedness Review Follow-up, Len Dems

The RMACC Preparedness review was completed. The reviewers had a problem with the list of the review. The review was completed and there was follow-up.

Decision: Rich Homann, Linden Wiebe and Jim Fletcher will meet and do a sign off on the results of the review.

Fire Program Management

Deadlines are coming up quick for the 301/455/462 job series. We need to plan for training, standards for hire and qualifications. We need to get Human Resources people involved.

Miscellaneous

There was a question concerning how Federal agencies, when transferring money to the States, know what indirect rates apply to money given to States? **It was advised the when Federal agencies are transferring money to State have it clearly stated "They will not allow indirect rates taken off".**

Wyoming State Forestry now has a Web site: <http://slf-web.state.wy.us/ami/forestry.htm>

Feel free to go on line and check it out!

Jim Fletcher will see about getting the site accessible from the RMC web page.

Meetings

Spring Fire Management Meeting – The week of April 4, 2005 in Rapid City, South Dakota Agenda topics were discussed. Linden will become the new RMCG Chair in January and is not sure who the Vice Chair will be. The position will default to the BIA. (Since the meeting Darrell Ausborn has agreed to represent the BIA as incoming Co-chair of RMCG) Darrell will be in charge of the Spring Fire Management Meeting.

? One of the RM Teams will be designated to manage the meeting as an incident. Dave Carter will take the task to the OPS Committee and the Committee will decide which Team gets the job.

? Linden Wiebe, Darrell Ausborn, and Joe Lowe will meet to discuss the agenda.

November RMCG Conference Call – November 4, 2004 at 0930

December RMCG Conference Call – December 2, 2004 at 0930



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January RMCG Conference Call – January 13, 2005 at 0930. We will discuss the agenda for the joint RMCG/GBCG meeting.

Joint RMCG/GBCB Meeting – Week of February 21, 2005 (tentative)

Joint NMAC/GMAC Meeting – Thursday, October 28, 2004. Rich Homann, Linden Wiebe and Jim Fletcher will attend. Agenda topics identified were National cache procedures, ROSS, and billing between agencies. If you have agenda topics you would like taken to the meeting please contact Rich, Linden or Jim

** Action Items from 10/19/04** - Denver, Colorado					
ITEM #	ACTION ITEM 1	DUE 2	RESPONSIBLE 3	STATUS 4	PAGE 5
1.	Draft and present a fair share proposal to RMCG.	12/15/04	Jim Fletcher	P	2
	Provide RMCG with 2 or 3 alternatives on how to fill the Business Manager position.	12/15/04	Jim Fletcher	P	2
	Develop a Position Description for the Business Manager position.	12/15/04	Jim Fletcher	P	2
2.	Outline a process to identify when RAWS station is no longer considered a NFDRS station, what notifications should be made when a problem station has been identified, what should be done with the station, etc. Provide a 2004 summary list of stations where there are issues, so agencies see the extent of the problems. The process will be completed and presented to RMCG for review.	Next RMCG meeting	Predictive Services	P	2



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ITEM #	ACTION ITEM 1	DUE 2	RESPONSIBLE 3	STATUS 4	PAGE 5
3.	Work on the announcement and on finding a replacement for the WFU Team.	ASAP	OPS Comm.	P	3
4.	Get the issue concerning sharing of Rx resources on the agenda of the National Forest Service Fire Directors.	1 st week in Nov.	Linden Wiebe	P	3
5.	Attend NMAC/GACG meeting and take issues identified forward.	Nov.	Rich Homann Lindon Wiebe Jim Fletcher	P	3
6.	Discuss Satellite Caches with the OPS Committee.	Next OPS meeting	Jim Fletcher	P	3
7.	Obtain signatures of Border Agreements. Send original to Joyce for RMCG records.	02/22/05	Jim Fletcher	P	3
11.	Review the position description and consider funding a position at RMCC.	ASAP	Rich Homann Ray Weidenhaft Joe Lowe Don Westover Ross Hauck	P	4
12.	Obtain the GBCG signature of the document submitted by the Busine Committee requesting approval to remain a joint geographic area committee. Return an original to Joyce for RMCG records.	ASAP	Ray Weidenhaft	P	4



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13.	Adherence to Operating Standards will be added as an agenda topic for the Spring Meeting.	04/05/05	RMCG	P	4
14.	Check on getting defensive driver training for those who need a government license in the Rocky Mountain area.	ASAP	Jim Krugman	P	5
15.	Discuss issue concerning individual who did not pass S-420 but qualified by experience.	ASAP	Dave Carter OPS Comm.	P	5
16.	Meet and do a sign off on the results of the RMACC Preparedness review.	ASAP	Rich Homann, Linden Wiebe Jim Fletcher	P	6
17.	Work with Flint to get the WY State Forestry web site on the RMC web page.	ASAP	Jim Fletcher	P	6
18.	Discuss with OPS Committee and assign a Team to manage the Spring Fire Management Meeting.	ASAP	Dave Carter	P	6
19.	Meet and discuss agenda for the Spring Fire Management Meeting.	ASAP	Linden Wiebe, Darrell Ausborn, Joe Lowe	P	6
20	<u>RMCG Conference Calls</u> Fri, November. 4, 2004 @ 0930 Thur, December 2, 2004 @ 0930 Thur, January 13, 2005 @ 0930		RMCG	P	7